Civil service mariners and military personnel work together to moor Military Sealift Command submarine tender USS Frank Cable as they return from an underway period.

PULLING TOGETHER

How MSC’s hybrid crews make it all work
I t’s official! Secretary of the Army John McHugh and Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus signed a historic memorandum that transfers the five joint high-speed vessels being built for the Army to the Navy for operation and maintenance by Military Sealift Command. MSC will now operate all 10 of the fast, shallow-draft ships being built by Austal USA in Mobile, Ala. Training for the first crews is already underway. USN’s Spearhead, JHSV 1, is scheduled to launch later this summer. The first four ships will be crewed by civil service mariners as we work out the concept of operations; anticipate mission requirements and the needs of our JHSV customers; and deal with the myriad details of operating this new class of ships. The remaining six will be operated by commercial mariners working for ship operating companies under contract to MSC.

Each ship will have a crew of 21 mariners, augmented by additional mission personnel as required. So we’ll be adding a substantial number of new jobs as we accept these ships for operation.

All the lessons we’ve learned with Westpac Express and HSV 2 Swift during the past several years are part of our knowledge base, and we believe we will be able to do great things as MSC provides these ships and our services to U.S. warfighters. The fact that MSC is going to operate the ships is just another indication of the level of trust we’ve earned from the Navy and DOD. When we say we deliver, we mean it. You can read more about the JHSV transfer on Page 3 in this edition of Seafall.

Project Management Initiative
By now you should be aware of my four strategic priorities and the direction I see Military Sealift Command heading in the next three to five years. To help us get there, we’ve embarked on an initiative to improve the way we manage major projects aboard and ashore. Using a common project management approach and language, the initiative will help us develop our capabilities, identify risks early in our processes and find ways to mitigate those risks. The initiative will also allow better project visibility to senior leadership and make sure we are tracking and focusing on the right target to meet our customers’ needs and mission requirements.

I know some of you already have extensive project management experience, and I want to use that knowledge and expertise to build and continuously improve our program. Formal training will be offered to members of the MSC workforce to raise our overall project management knowledge. We’ve begun a pilot effort at headquarters in the Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force and Special Mission Program under the able leadership of Ms. Eileen Roberson. Incorporating lessons learned here, we’ll expand and implement the program across the command.

You’ll see more about this as we move through 2011, but thanks, in advance, for your support and active participation. Together, we’ll realize MSC’s future vision.

Sexual Assault Awareness
One other topic I want to revisit with you is sexual assault awareness. Throughout the Navy, educational efforts are underway to make us all more aware of the devastation caused by sexual assault. The number of these assaults is on the rise across the Navy. You’ve seen the training presentations. You’ve read the briefings, and even if you have somehow missed them, it should be blatantly obvious that sexual assault is traumatic to the individual, is detrimental to the command and is against the law.

As part of the Navy, we are concerned about this. Too. Every one of us needs to take an active role in preventing sexual assault. If you see a situation developing, intervene. We all need to protect each other. It’s part of being a good shipmate.

For those of you afar, there is an on-call advocate, available 24/7, at this number: (757) 777-6708. Victims can also contact their Medical Services Officer aboard ship.

Ashorse, the Navy’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Team is available 24/7 to provide assistance to victims of sexual assault. The phone numbers for ashore locations are in the box on this page.

If you want to know more, try the following link when you get the chance: http://www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC_HQ_Site/WhatWeDo/Fleetland-FamilyReadiness/FamilyReadiness/FleetAndFamilySupportProgram/SexualAssaultPreventionAndResponse/index.htm. The information you’ll find there is excellent.

It’s everyone’s responsibility to help prevent sexual assault. Those in positions of command and authority bear an even higher responsibility to understand and use the prevention and response processes, report inappropriate behavior and assist victims who seek counsel.

MSC mariners take care of shipmates: Shipmates do not assault shipmates!

Yours aye.

Mark H. “Buz” Buzby
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy Commander, Military Sealift Command

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Team phone #s

Outside Continental US

Bahrain - 973-3940-3906 NAS
Guam - 671-488-0514
COMLOGWESTPAC Singapore - 65-9139-7015
NS Rota - 34-646-40-2571
NS Naples/Gaeta - 39-335-640-6621
NS Okinawa - 68-11-6392-1502
NSK Yokosuka - 81-45-736-7630
NSU Diego Garcia - 315-370-9300
CPA Okinawa - 81-90-6861-8476
CPA Sasebo - 81-90-9290-5856
CPA Yokosuka - 81-80-8046-5783
NAF Atsugi - 81-90-5058-5632
NAF Misawa - 81-311-66-6140
U.S. Naval Forces, Korea - 827-995-5247

Continental US

JEB Little Creek-Fort Story - 757-438-3455
COMNAVREG-HI Oahu - 808-722-6192
COMNAVREG-HI Kauai - 808-551-1452
NAF Diego Garcia - 315-370-9300
NAF Misawa - 81-311-66-6140
NAF Okinawa - 68-11-6392-1502
NAF Yokosuka - 81-45-736-7630
NAF Diego Garcia - 315-370-9300
NAF Misawa - 81-311-66-6140
CPA Okinawa - 81-90-6861-8476
CPA Sasebo - 81-90-9290-5856
CPA Yokosuka - 81-80-8046-5783
NAF Atsugi - 81-90-5058-5632
NAF Misawa - 81-311-66-6140
U.S. Naval Forces, Korea - 827-995-5247

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Team phone #s

Gulfstream

Guam - 671-488-0514

Continental US

JEB Little Creek-Fort Story - 757-438-3455
NAF Diego Garcia - 315-370-9300
NAF Misawa - 81-311-66-6140
U.S. Naval Forces, Korea - 827-995-5247

OSP phone numbers for ashore locations

http://www.fleetfamilyreadiness.com/PreventionAndResponse/Prevention/index.htm

COMSC

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Commander’s perspective

Joint high-speed vessel: Full ahead

The joint high-speed vessel is an aluminum-hulled catamaran with diesel engines that drive high-velocity water jets, propelling the vessel with 700 tons of cargo at 35 knots.
MSC sustains Operation Unified Protector

By Kim Dixon
MSCEURAF Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Big Horn delivered vital fuel and supplies to Canadian navy ship HMCS Charlotte-town April 28, the first replenishment at sea of a coalition ship by an MSC ship during Operation Unified Protector.

Unified Protector is the NATO-led operation to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas in Libya. The operation includes an arms embargo enforced by Charlotte-town and other NATO warships and aircraft patrolling the approaches to Libyan territorial waters to reduce the flow of arms, related material and mercenaries to Libya. Unified Protector is participating in the NATO-led operation intended to protect civilians in Libya. The operation includes an arms embargo enforced by NATO warships and aircraft patrolling the approaches to Libyan territorial waters to reduce the flow of arms, related material and mercenaries to Libya.

Big Horn, in addition to MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary and fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha, is operating out of Mediterranean ports where all three ships load food, fuel, mail and other supplies for delivery to U.S. Navy and coalition ships operating at sea, as scheduled by MSC Europe and Africa Commander/Task Force 63, out of Naples, Italy. Replenishments at sea allow the U.S. Navy and coalition navy ships to respond to taskings from the NATO maritime component commander for Unified Protector, Italian navy Vice Adm. Rinaldo Veri.

“MSC ships continue to be a major lifeline for the sustainment of all ships that have been participating in Operation Odyssey Dawn and Operation Unified Protector,” said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jamie O’Leary, replenishment officer for CTF 63.

“Navy ships require the frequent movement of various commodities in order to continue operations,” said O’Leary. “Since the commencement of Odyssey Dawn and Unified Protector, the U.S. and coalition ships have been required to remain at sea on station and mission ready, rather than having to disrupt operations and return to port for fuel. The evolution went very well,” said Big Horn’s civil service master Capt. Steven Karavolos. “We have conducted replenishments at sea with Canadian ships in the past, which creates the esprit de corps and camaraderie that is necessary to be able to perform evolutions like this one in the middle of real-world operations.”

Big Horn delivered 29,782 gallons of fuel to Charlotte-town during the 44-minute evolution while operating alongside at 13 knots on a mostly cloudy day in the moderate seas of the central Mediterranean. This delivery allowed Charlotte-town, which to remain at sea, on station and mission ready, rather than having to disrupt operations and return to port for fuel.

“Reducing redundancies and saving six by civilian contract mariners,” said Big Horn’s civil service master Capt. Steven Karavolos. “This agreement with the Army demonstrates our commitment to reducing redundancies and saving money for the taxpayer,” said Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus. “This is a responsible step that will ensure our military remains the most formidable fighting force the world has ever known.”

The 338-foot-long JHSVs will be capable of transporting up to 312 embarked personnel plus a crew of up to 41, along with 20,000 square feet or 600 tons of cargo at speeds in excess of 35 knots for 1,200 nautical miles. The JHSV is also specifically designed to operate in shallow-draft ports and waterways, providing U.S. forces added mobility and flexibility.
Transition to hybrid crewing

Implementing the hybrid crewing concept began in November 2003, when command ship USS Coronado transitioned to MSC. The ship sailed for the first time with a hybrid crew late in March 2004, when Coronado deployed for 10 months as the U.S. 7th Fleet flagship, temporarily replacing USS Blue Ridge. Coronado was decommissioned and removed from active duty in 2006.

USS Mount Whitney transferred to MSC in late 2004 and underwent a two-month conversion to accommodate both civil service mariners and military personnel. The ship deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations with its hybrid crew in January 2005, where it continues to operate today.

“Hybrid crewing frees up military personnel so they can serve somewhere else in the Navy fleet, ultimately increasing productivity in the Navy,” said Bruce Salgado, Special Mission Program project officer for service support ships. Submarine tenders Land and Cable followed with the hybrid crewing concept in February 2008 and February 2010, respectively.

“A great amount of deliberation went into the concept and implementation of hybrid crewing,” said Military Sealift Fleet Support Command Director Jack Taylor. “Some questioned the concept of sailors and civilians serving side by side aboard a commissioned Navy vessel. But those of us familiar with MSC’s long and successful history of operating CVIFAR-crewed, fleet support ships, many with embarked military departments, were confident that this new hybrid crewing concept would work, and it has. I’m proud to say our CVIFARs have successfully taken on many of the responsibilities formerly assigned to sailors, thereby freeing the military personnel for assignment to warfighting missions.”

One of the benefits of using CVIFARs to operate and maintain the ships is a drastic reduction in crew sizes, returning more than 1,000 sailors and Navy officers to the combatant Navy. Mount Whitney’s crew size changed from 576 military in 2004 to a combined crew of 170 military and 154 CVIFARs in 2005. Land’s crew size changed from 581 military in 2007 to a combined crew of 170 military and 157 CVIFARs in 2008. Cable’s crew size changed from 599 military in 2009 to a combined crew of 170 military and 157 CVIFARs in 2010.

Despite significant changes, hybrid crews have continued to operate efficiently, maintaining a full schedule of operations and exercises around the world. Hybrid-crewed ships benefit from the significant seagoing experience and training that CVIFAR crew members offer. All deck and engineering officers are licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard, and most of them have degrees from one of the nation’s maritime academies. Unlicensed CVIFARs are required to undergo training and obtain U.S. Coast Guard issued credentials. All CVIFARs spend the majority of their maritime careers at sea. This is in contrast to uniformed military personnel, who rotate through a series of sea and shore assignments throughout their careers.

Division of labor with hybrid crewing

Aboard Mount Whitney, CVIFARs are responsible for the deck, engineering and supply departments, while the uniformed Navy side is in charge of the communications, weapons and medical departments. On the submarine tenders, CVIFARs head the engine, supply and communications departments, and Navy military personnel run the submarine repair, weapons and operations departments.

The command structure for the hybrid-crewed ships is also unique. At the top of the chain of command is a Navy captain who serves as commanding officer; every department aboard the ship, whether comprising CVIFARs or uniformed personnel, ultimately reports to this person. Another Navy officer serves as the ship’s second in command, the executive officer, and is responsible for administrative duties relating to the ship’s Navy personnel. Similarly, a CVIFAR chief mate serves as an officer in charge has administrative authority for the CVIFAR crew members. The chief mate/ officer in charge reports directly to the commanding officer.

With the melding of two different cultures, that of uniformed Navy personnel and that of the CVIFARs, the transition to hybrid crewing wasn’t without challenges, according to Navy Capt. Edward Seal, who served as commanding officer of Land during most of the ship’s transformation to hybrid crewing from 2008 to 2010. He said, “The biggest challenge was working with and understanding the culture of both groups.”

Both groups are professional, capable, and have time-tested ways of doing business that get excellent results,” said Seal. “The challenge was taking the best of both cultures and combining them into one effective organization on the ship. It took time for both sides to realize that they could work together as one, that they could both learn from the other, and that there, in fact, may be a different way to accomplish a task, neither necessarily more right than the other.”

That same sentiment was echoed by one of Land’s current leaders. “This is a unique opportunity for our two organizations, which operate under different instructions and regulations, to see firsthand how each operates,” said Kevin Sauls, Land’s CVIFAR chief mate. “The benefit that these experiences bring is a better understanding of our different cultures, which will be further shared among our fleets.”

Smooth sailing

Today, life aboard the hybrid-crewed ships shows the integration of two cultures, and by several measures, the hybrid concept is working smoothly. While berthing areas for CVIFARs and Navy personnel generally remain separate, both facets of the crew mingle in the ship’s public spaces, like lounges, wardrooms and galley. Navy officers and licensed CVIFARs share an eating space, while the unlicensed and enlisted share another. The informal coexistence in these areas promotes a camaraderie that carries over into the professional interactions required to operate the ship.

I often interact with the officers daily on a professional basis, usually coordinating repairs or operations of deck machinery for evolution,” said CVIFAR Brian Bennett, Land’s 2nd assistant engineer. Off duty, Bennett said, he frequently enjoys dinner in port and a cigar at sea with his military officer counterparts. “I’ve made some very good friends in the military community,” he said.

CVIFARs and military personnel learn from each other while working and living in close quarters.

Land’s experienced licensed deck officers assist military officers by teaching them navigational skills, and by helping them to prepare for their Surface Warfare Officer boards, said Sauls. Meanwhile, CVIFARs like Sauls are included in parts of Navy culture usually reserved for military personnel.

“I’ve been invited to join functions such as the tradition-
Background: Hybrid-crewed, Military Sealift Command-operated command ship USS Mount Whitney serves as the U.S. 6th Fleet command ship in its Gaeta, Italy, homeport. The commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa planned Libya operations from Mount Whitney while the ship was in port in February and later directed Libya operations while the ship was underway in support of Operation Odyssey Dawn.

Left: Weapons department Navy personnel and civil service mariners assigned to MSC-operated submarine tender USS Emory S. Land simulate inserting a missile into a submarine tube during Tomahawk guided-missile training in Diego Garcia.

Right: Sailors and civil service mariners assigned to hybrid-crewed, MSC-operated submarine tender USS Frank Cable lower a 3,000-pound inert torpedo onto a munitions barge during a training exercise.

al “Hail and Farewell” and “Dining In” ceremonies,” said Sauls. “These are not typical within the MSC organization, but allow more interaction and greater opportunities to bridge our cultural differences.”

Another milestone in the hybrid crewing concept occurred in 2010. Land’s hybrid crew distinguished itself by receiving one of the Navy’s top safety awards. The hybrid crew demonstrated initiative by airing safety videos on the ship’s closed-circuit system and filming a training video to prevent work-related injuries. With that, the crew earned the 2010 Chief of Naval Operations Afloat Safety Award, which is presented annually, and the right to display the Navy’s green safety “S.”

“Without a doubt, CIVMARs and sailors come from unique and distinct perspectives,” said Purser Charlie Tompkins, a CIVMAR assigned to Land. “Still, both cultures share a dedication to duty, significant expertise in their assigned areas and a respect for the chain of command, which is the key to meeting mission requirements.”

Tomkins, who served as a military administrator/personnel officer aboard Navy submarine tender USS Simon Lake in the mid-1970s, has a good basis from which to make a comparison between all-military and hybrid crews. He added, “I think both facets of the seagoing team have learned a great deal from each other, and that’s been a very positive outcome of hybrid crewing.”

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jeremy Starr

U.S. Navy photo by Meghan Patrick

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Brian T. Black
Attention MSC workforce

By Lt. j.g. Roy Kotzbach
MSC headquarters

This summer, Military Sealift Command will conduct two workplace climate surveys. One survey is for ashore personnel, and the other is for afloat personnel.

The survey addresses three areas: leadership and professional development; diversity and women’s issues; and quality of life.

For the last survey, which focused on afloat personnel and maritime personnel, about a quarter of the relevant workforce responded. This year, the goal is to greatly increase participation to gain an even clearer picture.

The questionnaire, which allows for anonymous participation, will take about 20 minutes to complete.

Once the results are tabulated, they will be compared to the results of other Navy organizations and those of the Department of Defense overall.

MSC headquarters will e-mail the survey URL link and password to all ashore personnel in June and to all afloat personnel in July. The goal is to complete the survey by August.

For seagoing employees who do not have e-mail, information on the URL and password will be provided on each ship.

Results of the survey will be published in a future edition of Sealift.

MSC welcomes Jeanne Galindo, maritime forces manpower and management; Timothy Tralongo, Prepositioning Program; Mohammad Kasarian, command control, communication and computer systems; and Adrian Schulte, public affairs.

MSC bids farewell to Jonathan Goldstein and Charles Dennison, command, control, communication, and computer systems; and Michael Crosby, logistics directorate; David Anderson, Sealift Program; Debra Dubose-Dinkins, command, control, communication and computer systems directorate; and Juan Prieto, logistics directorate, for 25 years of service.

Other personnel leaving are Ed Billie, Sealift Program; Anthony Clark, logistics directorate; Robert Gleicher, chief of the comptroller; Paul Handler, engineering directorate; Clarice Turner, contracts and business management directorate; Steve Lucido, maritime forces, man-power and management directorate; Elyssa Parana, contracts and business management directorate; and Thomas Snider, operations directorate, for 20 years of service.

Navy Rear Adm. Mark Busby, commander, Military Sealift Command, presented Chief Engineer Ray Blanchet, Human Capital Development Group director, with a Global War on Terrorism medal May 9 at MSC headquarters.

MSC headquarters recognized 21 members of the workforce at a ceremony April 28 for their length of service.

Sheila Petri, assistant director, Marine Program, and Cathy Jo Stangler, special mission director, were recognized for 30 years of service.

Michael Crosby, logistics directorate; David Anderson, Sealift Program; Debra Dubose-Dinkins, command, control, communication and computer systems directorate; and Juan Prieto, logistics directorate, were recognized for 25 years of service.

Ed Billie, Sealift Program; Anthony Clark, logistics directorate; Robert Gleicher, chief of the comptroller; Paul Handler, engineering directorate; Clarice Turner, contracts and business management directorate; Steve Lucido, maritime forces, manpower and management directorate; Elyssa Parana, contracts and business management directorate; and Thomas Snider, operations directorate, were recognized for 20 years of service.

Stephen Bishop, engineering directorate; and Carlos Cruz, were recognized for 15 years of service.

Kevin Cammie, operations directorate; Wayne Reece, operations directorate and Martin Allen, engineering directorate, were recognized for 10 years of service.

MSC and the Sealifters International Union met March 7-10 and April 11-14, as part of negotiations to update Civilian Marine Personnel Incentives Agreement 3.0, “Hours of Work and Premium Pay.”

The MSC team included lead negotiator Renee Desrosiers and Andrew Lefebvre, maritime forces, manpower and management; David Townsend, office of counsel; and Kathleen Giacolone, military Seafleet Force Command maritime forces, manpower and management.

The subject matter experts were civilian masters Capt. David Gomm and Capt. Robert Seabrook; Chief Engineer James Sullivan; pursers David Guilbert and Wendy Richards; unlicensed Junior Engineer Floyd Fulllove; Engine Utilitityman Greg Woods; Supply Officer Christopher Jenkins; Junior Supply Officer Michael Wine; Yeoman Storekeeper Kelvin Thomas; Mark Kaniewski and King Merendino.

The parties reached agreements on unlicensed engine department and supply department work rules. The language of the instruction was simplified to ensure clarity and effective implementation.

Unlicensed engine department language includes consensus on electricians, using paint spray guns, refrigeration engineers, oil spills and welding/lathe work.

Supply department language includes consensus on assignment to hours of work, movement of ship stores, services provided to extra persons, serving meals outside the mess room, and unbroken hours for meals and rest time.

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Friends to the rescue

for their recent support of Operation Van Buskirk thanked all crew members him the embarked diving equipment.

Sealift Command rescue and salvage Adm. Scott Van Buskirk visited Military Beach, Va., to three newly refur-

from Camp Pendleton, Virginia the California coast.

cargo/ammunition ship USNS Norfolk immediately adjacent to

aboard MSC large, medium-speed, saw loadout operations April 18-24

Command Atlantic in Norfolk, over-

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Washington Chambers completed its initial shakedown cruise in April off the California coast.

The final phase of staff moves from Camp Pendleton, Virginia Beach, Va., to three newly refurbished buildings on Naval Station Norfolk immediately adjacent to

Tomodachi, the U.S. Navy’s relief efforts in response to Japan’s March earthquake, tsunamis and related radiation issues. Civilian Capt. Kristin Mangold, prospective master of oceanographic survey ship USNS Summer, visited MSC Far East headquarters April 18 to meet with command staff members dur-

riage visit before reporting to the ship.

Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three staff members, along with 11 crew members from Maritime Prepo-

ning Force ship USNS MAJ Stephen W. Pless, joined 50 students from the Northern Marianas College in a tree-planting ceremony and beach clean-up April 12 on Managaha Island, about a mile from Saipan.

During an April 8 awards cer-

emony held on board MFP ship USNS 1st LT Jack Lumamus, MPS Squadron Three commander Navy Capt. Herman Awai presented Navy Operations Officer Chief Fred Warren with a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal to mark the conclusion of his tour as assistant operations officer. Warren retired from active duty after 24 years of service.

MPS Squadron Two ships USNS SGT Maje Kocak, USNS 1ST LT Baldomero Lopez, MV CAPT Steven L. Bennett, MV LJC John U.D. Page and MV MAJ Bernard F. Fish er participated in a group-sail near Diego Garcia April 19-21. The ships trained in conducting an emergency sortie from Diego Garcia’s lagoon, formation steering, man-overboard drills, and abandon-ship procedures.

MPS Squadron Two welcomes Navy Lt. j.g. Anna Sansiveri, who relieves Navy Lt. j.g. Talbot Henderson as the squadron’s force protection officer.

Mark Bigelow, marine transpor-

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During a nighttime ceremony at the General Dynamics NASCCO shipyard in San Diego. McLean is the 12th of 14 dry cargo/ammunition ships pro-

ected for operation by MSC. Eleven are slated to serve as part of MSC’s Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force, and three will join MSC’s Maritime Prepositioning Force.

MSC ammunition ship USNS Shasta was guided to the pier in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, for the last time as an MSC ship in April, before decommissioning on April 29. The ship was christened and launched as USS Mount Shasta at Ingalls Shipyard in Pascagoula, Miss., in April 1971, and delivered to the Navy in Charleston, S.C., several months later. Mount Shasta served as part of the U.S. Navy Fleet until Oct. 1, 1997, when the ship was decommissioned. On the same day, Mount Shasta was renamed USNS Shasta.

MSCPAC welcomes Navy Cmdr. Charlton Johnson, MSCPAC’s new operations officer. Johnson joins the MSC team following a one-year individual augmentation assignment in Stuttgart, Germany. The command also welcomes Matthew Mueller, tanker/special mission operations desk officer, who joins MSCPAC from MSC Europe and Africa.

Fair winds and following seas to MSCPAC’s operations officer, Navy Cmdr. Ray Franklin, as he starts his new assignment with MSCPAC’s detach-

ation at U.S Transportation Command.

Atlantic • Lines

Naval Air Forces Far East • Hawaii

Civilians and mariners were eligible to sign a form to the standards outlined in the U.S. Commander 3rd Fleet Operational Order 201. They expect to complete the rewrite by the end of July.

MSC long-term chartered tanker MT Evergreen State participated in three days of underway replenishment and consolidated capability training with Naval Sea Systems Command in Port Hueneme, Calif., in April. The training is instrumental in enhancing the ship’s capability to meet MSC’s fuel-support mission to the Navy and the rest of the Department of Defense.

USNS William McLean, the newest ship in the Navy’s Lewis and Clark- class of dry cargo/ammunition ships, was christened and launched April 16.
N00H update: CIVMARs benefit from leadership training & improvement in assignment tracking

By NOOH and James Marconi, MSC Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command launched its Human Capital Development Group, or N00H, in April 2010, following a climate survey that identified MSC workforce areas for improvement, both at sea and ashore. Since then, N00H’s three-person, MSC head-quarters-based staff has collaborated with MSC’s global leadership to put a heightened emphasis on caring for the command’s global workforce.

Fifty initiatives, a series of specific objectives addressing specific areas of employees’ well-being, were introduced and put in motion. Key among the new initiatives currently underway is leadership training, an effort to cultivate greater leadership skills in the seagoing segment of the MSC workforce.

Beginning in March, a highly successful two-day course called Leadership Development Training and Coaching for Civilian Mariner Supervisors was introduced. This course gives MSC’s licensed and civil service mariners who serve in supervisory roles the chance to practice leadership skills through hands-on exercises. Training focused on case studies, with CIVMARs working in pairs or small groups to solve problems they might encounter at work.

MSC created the training program in coordination with a company that specializes in leadership training for government employees. Two professional facilitators delivered the first seminars March 21-24 in Norfolk. Later, April 4-7 and 11-14, this same training was offered in San Diego. A total of 155 CIVMARs attended.

For two days, CIVMARs participated in seminars, including lectures and exercises on a broad range of leadership-oriented topics, such as critical thinking, listening, body language in communication and teamwork.

“The intent of the leadership training is to provide the mariners with a top-notch leadership course to improve their management skills and prepare them for the next level of advancement,” said NOOH task force director Chief Engineer Ray Blanchet.

“We had different scenarios on how to detect problems without firing one of our subordinates,” said Boatswain’s Mate Anthony Brooks from Brandenburg, who attended the training while waiting for a shipboard assignment to CIVMAR Support Unit-West in San Diego, one of MSC’s two assignment pools. “We discussed how to approach a problem if you’re having difficulty with some guys and how to use the chain of command if you feel like you’re ‘not getting through to the individual’

A NOOH team member Boatswain’s Mate Rob Hoffman, who attended one training session, said that several CIVMARs gave him positive responses about their experiences.

“I talked with a few of them, and they seemed happy with the quality of training they received,” Hoffman said. “It’s definitely a program that we’ll continue to offer as NOOH moves forward in meeting its top 50 initiatives.”

After completing the course, each CIVMAR has a 60-day window to set up a two-hour review session with a personal coach to ask questions or practice skills learned during the seminars.

Another one of MSC’s major leadership training initiatives is the new offering of an adapted version of a Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies course on leadership. Chief Engineer Bob Manus, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command special assistant to the director, took the lead in restructuring this five-day course for MSC’s masters and chief engineers. The first course was held April 18-22 at the CIVMAR Support Unit-East in Norfolk, and seven masters and five chief engineers participated.

“The course is a great refresher for those of us who have served in seagoing leadership roles, while providing some new formal leadership tools,” said Manus. “The course also provided an opportunity to meet with Admiral [Mark] Buzby and Director [Jack] Taylor to discuss the strategic goals of MSC and their expectations of the MSC CIVMAR leadership. Plans call for offering this course to CIVMAR leaders on both coasts at future times. I highly recommend this training.”

Improvements in assignment tracking

In addition to new leadership training opportunities, NOOH also reports progress in simplifying the tracking process for CIVMARs entering MSC’s assignment pools in Norfolk and San Diego. Traditionally, mariners have signed in manually using paper forms kept at each pool. NOOH and MSC Command, Control, Communication and Computer Systems directorate developed an easier process, called the Personnel Accountability System. With the new system, CIVMARs can check in electronically with either a thumbprint or common access card. NOOH began testing the system in May.

“It’s a much more efficient system,” Hoffman said. “PAS reduces the time CIVMARs spend in line, eliminates confusion about handwritten signatures and improves overall reporting accuracy.”

MSC changes leadership

By Bill Cook

Military Sealift Command Atlantic, the Norfolk-based U.S. Navy command responsible for MSC ships transporting equipment, fuel, supplies and ammunition in the Western Ocean, changed command during a ceremony at Naval Station Norfolk May 4.

Navy Capt. Samuel R. Norton assumed command of MSC from outgoing commander Navy Capt. Michael G. Graham during a 10 a.m. ceremony at the Vista Point Conference Center.

Graham, who served as MSC Atlantic commander since April 2009, praised the staff that served him for two years. “Like most of my generation of surface warfare officers, I had little knowledge about what went on behind the scenes to get my ships the fuel and stores they required,” he said. “I would like to be able to tell you that MSC has a magic formula for making it all happen, but that would be selling short the extraordinary efforts of a very dedicated group of individuals.”

Graham’s next assignment is chief of staff for Naval Surface Force Atlantic. The command, located at Naval Support Activity, Norfolk, was established in 1975 as the type commander for the cruiser/destroyer, amphibious and mine forces in the U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, commander, MSC, served as guest speaker for the event and lauded Graham for his service.

“I often refer to the massive earthquake that struck Haiti last year as one of the watershed events in MSC’s recent history,” said Buzby. “We were on scene with more vessels, faster than any other outfit, mustering 21 ships. This was all orchestrated by Commodore Graham and his outstanding team.”

Norton last served as commander of amphibious assault ship USS Nassau, which he led on its final deployment prior to decommissioning earlier this year.

“I am honored to take the helm of a command as vibrant and important as MSCALT,” said Norton. “It will be a rewarding challenge to carry on such a vital Department of Defense mission.”

Norton’s at-sea commands also include mine countermeasures ship USS Pioneer and amphibious transport dock ship USS Trenton. Nassau, Pioneer and Trenton were all selected as Commander Naval Surface Force Atlantic Battle “E” winners under Norton’s leadership.

Norton’s shore duty assignments include Afloat Training Group Norfolk’s Gas Turbine Team Four, Amphibious Group Two’s Training and Readiness Department, and U.S. Joint Forces Command’s Resources and Process Improvement Branch.